

BEFORE THE VIDEO RECORDINGS BOARD OF REVIEW

In the matter of the Video Recordings Act 1987 and in the matter of an application by the Secretary for Internal Affairs for a review of the video recording Double Penetrations Vol.1.

Chairperson: Hilary Lapsley

Members: Christopher Carter, Elsie Ellison, Mark Humphrey, Mervyn Hancock.

Re-examination of video recording at Wellington on 6 September 1991.

Particulars of Video Recording

Video Recordings Authority No.: 61591

Title of main feature: Double Penetrations Vol. 1 (note: the video slick is entitled Double Penetrations Special).

Duration of the main feature: 105 minutes 29 seconds.

Director: Not stated.

Trailers: No. 2

1. Copyright Warning – 0 minutes 16 seconds
2. Hot Video Presents – 0 minutes 16 seconds

Decision

This is a review of a video recording classified “Indecent In The Hands Of Persons Under The Age Of 18 Years” with the description “Contains Explicit Sexual Material” by the Video Recordings Authority on 13 June 1991. The video recording was submitted to the Authority by the Labelling Body pursuant to s.15 of the Video Recordings Act 1987, following an application to it for the issuing of a label by V M Distribution.

Double Penetrations Vol. 1 is a video recording consisting of a number of sequences explicitly portraying sexual activities. As the title suggests, the video dwells on scenarios where two men engage in simultaneous anal and vaginal intercourse with one woman, although other types of sexual activity are also shown, including fellatio and cunnilingus. There are also sequences of a woman masturbating alone, of a man and woman having sexual intercourse, of sexual activities between three women and of group voyeurism.

There is no plot development evident, each sequence being disconnected from the previous one and usually involving different actors. Some sequences begin with a very brief attempt at setting the scene before the sexual activities commence. To give examples: a woman dressed in a “prudish” manner is sitting alone in her flat when a stranger comes to the door asking for something to eat and while she is preparing food, sexual activity commences; a woman interviewing a man is persuaded to have sex with him; a secretary invites the men in her office to have sex with her; a group of onlookers watch various scenes of sexual activity; two actors dressed as college boys

begin sexual activities with a prostitute; a woman discovers her partner in bed with another woman and he then persuades her to have sex with him. This latter sequence is the only one in the film where the participants are shown as having an ongoing sexual relationship; in most instances the participants are portrayed as engaging in sex with strangers or workmates, or else the relationship is unclear.

For the most part, the video is a visual record of actors engaging in a great variety of sexual activities, much of which is depicted in close-up.

The Board considered this video recording in relation to the statutory criteria laid down in the Video Recordings Act 1987.

The dominant effect of the video recording as a whole

The Board agreed that the dominant effect of the video recording as a whole was pornographic. The majority of Board thought the video intended to give the impression that sexual activities of the kind portrayed are commonplace and eagerly (illegible word) upon by both men and women. Board members held a variety of views about how the dominant effect should be further characterised: as degradation of women and, to a lesser extent, of men as well; as encouragement to viewers to experiment with double penetration; as conveying, through a tedious portrayal, that the activities shown are boring; and as showing that the portrayed activities are fun to watch.

The extent to which the video recording has merit, value or importance in relation to artistic, social, cultural or other matters

The Board agreed that the video recording had no or minimal merit in relation to artistic, social, cultural or other matters. It is not a work of art nor does it have any serious purpose in its portrayal of sexual activity.

The persons, classes of persons, or the age groups of persons, by whom the video recording is most likely to be viewed

The Board decided that the target audience was largely adult, heterosexual males but also believed that it would attract some adolescent viewers since young people sometimes obtain access to this type of video, even though they commonly are restricted to persons 18 years and over. There was a concern that some people, especially adolescents and women, could be coerced into watching the video against their wishes through social pressure.

The extent and degree to which and the manner in which the video recording depicts, includes, or treats anti-social behaviour or offensive language or behaviour

In relation to anti-social behaviour, the Board expressed its concern that there was no portrayal of safe sexual practices. Disease-promoting practices, such as unprotected anal penetration followed by oral contact, were shown without comment.

Offensive language was not considered to be a major feature of this video recording.

The portrayal of explicit sexual activity, the main theme of the video, could be considered offensive, but the Board came to the conclusion that portraying explicit sexual activity in itself is not necessarily offensive; it is the manner and context of the

portrayal that is relevant to this consideration. Once again, the Board decided that the possible offensiveness of the video hinged on the extent of its denigratory qualities and decided to discuss such matters further in relation to Section 21(e).

The extent and the degree to which and the manner in which the video recording denigrates any particular class of the general public by reference to the colour, race, ethnic or national origins, sex, or religious beliefs of the members of that class

The majority of the Board believes that this video is extremely denigrating of women as a class and, to a lesser (illegible word) also denigrates men. The majority felt that because the video portrayed women and men of different races and occupations engaging in various forms of sexual activities, it was intended to convey to its audience certain conclusions about human sexual pleasure generally; in particular that women actively enjoy the whole range of sexual activities carried out upon them by men in the video, including being penetrated orally and anally, or genitally and anally at the same time by two different men; having semen ejaculated into their faces; and further, that women engaged in non-sexual activities, such as working or sitting at home on their own, actively welcome sexual approaches from men. The majority of the Board thought these portrayals conveyed an image of women as being constantly sexually available and welcoming any sexual attention from men, which, it was felt, is denigrating to women. Sexual harassment at work and sexual coercion of women in various contexts is socially undesirable and the majority of the Board felt that this video, through its denigration of women, contributes to attitudes which may promote or at least lead to tolerance of such socially undesirable behaviours.

Furthermore, although the video contained no overt portrayals of sexual violence or abuse, a contemptuous and abusive attitude to women was conveyed in some of its dialogue. Some dialogue and scenes contained overtones of, or allusions to, coercion. Examples are a man boasting, "I remember that slave girl that me and King Paul worked over", a man referring to himself as a "piledriver" and saying that a girl had "begged him to come because I was hurting her so", a scene where a woman tells a man to take his hands off her, while he tells her to hold still and sexual activity commences; and another scene where a woman also tells a man to take his hands off her, which is met with the reply "I want mine now", followed by sexual activity.

There are also references to abusive sexuality with the young: e.g. a man boasts about sex with young girls and refers to a babysitter who carried out fellatio on him; actors dressed as young teenage boys are shown being initiated by a prostitute.

Some comments indicated a contempt for women, e.g. a comment that a woman was "just hamburger".

The scene where a woman, dressed "prudishly", sitting on her own in her apartment reading, allowed a hungry stranger into the house and then welcomed sexual advances from him, has overtones of a stranger rape scenario and conveys the message that women would welcome sex from strange men who come to the door.

Some members of the Board also felt that the video denigrated men through its portrayal of them as sexually obsessive and callous. They felt that overall, the video presented both men and women as sexual objects, as users and used.

A minority of the Board believed that these portrayals did not amount to a denigration of women as a class and that they were tedious, unbelievable and would not be taken as serious portrayals of real life.

The particular purpose for which the video recording is intended to be used

The Board agreed that the main purpose of the video was to titillate its audience; one member also felt that its purpose was to be used in a group viewing situation to facilitate group sexual activities.

The effect of the soundtrack

The soundtrack was not discordant with the video as a whole and its impact has been considered in tandem with the images under the above headings.

The number of video recordings of a similar nature which are available for supply to the public, and the likely cumulative effect of the viewing by the public of the video recording being examined

Some concern was expressed about the number of similar videos available to the public and about the long term effects of watching such denigratory material, given that explicit scenes of sexual activity are seldom available except in this type of pornographic video; special concern was expressed that young people might learn about sexual relationships through this type of video.

After considering the above factors, the Board discussed whether Double Penetrations Vol. 1 was injurious to the public good. A majority of the Board believed that it is injurious to the public good because of the ways in which it depicts matters of sex; in particular, because of the ways in which it denigrates women through a degrading portrayal of their sexuality as available for men to constantly use and abuse.

Findings

The Board took a vote as to whether Double Penetrations Vol. 1 should be declared indecent. Two members believed that it was indecent, two members believed that it was indecent in the hands of persons under the age of 18 years. Using the casting vote the chairperson declared the video to be indecent. The matter of whether making excisions could change the decision of indecency was considered and it was decided that the decision was based on the overall nature of the video recording, rather than on excisable scenes.

Therefore, the Board has determined that the video recording Double Penetrations Vol. 1 deals with sexual matters in a manner which is injurious to the public good and accordingly classifies it as indecent.

31.10.91

Hilary Lapsley
Chairperson